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Stops and Zones' Laborer "A" Jose Aguirre places a Braille decal at a Metro bus stop (Photo by Chip Hazen). **Inset:** The Braille decals include the Metro Bus line number and the direction (Photo by Lisa Huynh).

Braille Decals to Help the Blind Navigate Metro Bus System

BY LISA HUYNH

(March 10, 2004) Approximately 10,000 blind people use the Metro systems and many of them have trouble finding the correct bus stops.

To alleviate the problem, Metro's Accessibility Advisory Committee, recently suggested the installation of tactile and Braille decals at bus stops to help the blind correctly find their bus stop.

In coordination with Metro's Stops and Zones Department and students at Braille Institute, this four-month pilot project will test the success of the program by determining if persons who are blind or visually impaired can locate the decal and if the decals will stand up to weather and vandalism.

"We're doing this so that blind people can figure out where the bus stops are," says ADA Compliance Officer Chip Hazen. "Instead of having to ask someone where the stop is, the decals will give them the opportunity to do the stop independently."

Decals on Line 204

Last month, Stops and Zones personnel started placing Braille decals at bus stops along Metro Bus Line 204, which serves the Braille Institute, the second largest school for the blind in the country.

Line 204 runs along Vermont Av. between Hollywood Blvd. and 120th St.

The decals, which include the line number and the direction of the route

written in Braille and raised letters, are being placed three and a half inches below the map case.

Stops and Zones personnel are about half way done with installing the decals.

"If the blind can find the decals and it makes sense to them, then we'll expand the project to other bus stops," says Hazen. "The whole purpose of the ADA is to help people use the transportation service just like those individuals who do not have a disability."

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